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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 344. FOR WEEK ENDING AUGUST 3, 1895. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

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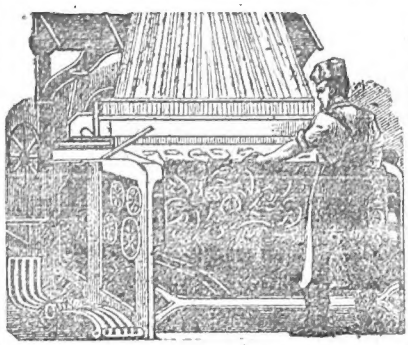

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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON.

No. 344.] *FOR THE WEEK ENDING AUGUST 3, 1895.* [PRICE ONE PENNY.

HOW JACK'S AUNT WENT CRAZY

CHAPTER I.

"FIFTEEN minutes' wait!"

The train for England drew up at Amiens station, bringing to an end a painful talk between two people in a first-class carriage.

"The long and the short of it is, Lilla, you will have to put this nonsense out of your head," said Captain Jones, as he opened the door.

He was a good-looking man, with stern eyes and a determined jaw. He might have been at least a dozen years older than his sister, who, however, had defended herself through a course of bullying all the way from Paris.

"You had better come and have some luncheon."

"No," she said; "I don't want any."

"Don't be a goose."

"I'm not hungry. I would rather stay here."

Under any other circumstances Captain Jones would have stuck to his point till he gained it. But in this case it would have meant losing his own luncheon, so he shrugged his shoulders, and walked away with the stream of passengers towards the refreshment-room.

Lilla sat quite still in her place. She was a girl of twenty, and might have been very pretty if her features and expression had been a little less decided. Her eyes were remarkable—large, blue, and grave, with straight brows and dark lashes. She was pale, but her complexion was clear and good. Sometimes, when she was amiable, she did look very pretty, and at all times she was handsome. She was plainly dressed, and her manner was cool and straightforward.

Just now she looked anything but happy; paler and graver than usual, frowning slightly and sadly, as she sat alone by the carriage window and gazed across the lines at the crowded station. She could see her brother's broad shoulders disappearing into the *buffet*, and thought, as she watched him, how horribly disagreeable he was. As if a woman of twenty might not decide for herself! Just personal prejudice, and nothing more. He was so narrow-minded; he thought everybody ought to be made on his own pattern. What could be more ridiculous!

Just now she looked anything but happy.

Some sort of dimness, a dimness of vexation, clouded Lilla's eyes, as she thought of the long, weary argument she had just gone through. Of course, she was not weak-minded enough to cry; but it is terribly hopeless work trying to convince one's brother, or even to make him understand that one means to have one's own way. After about five minutes of peace, and a strange stillness, for the train was nearly empty, Lilla was startled from her thoughts by a voice from the platform below.

"May I ask if this carriage is full?"

She looked, and saw an elderly woman, carrying a bag and some shawls. Her voice was breathless, and very tired; but there was a curious charm in it, a high sweet tone; and as she lifted anxious eyes to Lilla, a very pretty smile lighted up her pale, delicate face. She was extremely well dressed, but looked a little dishevelled. Lilla wondered instinctively what she had done with her maid.

With the unaffected readiness which belonged to her, she instantly made the stranger welcome, took her bag and shawls, helped her to climb into the carriage, and thought with satisfaction how disappointed Percy would be, when he came back, to find that his brotherly scoldings could not go on in peace all the way to Boulogne.

"Oh, thank you; how very kind you are!" said the stranger, looking earnestly at Lilla, and smiling sweetly. "This is delightful. I thought I should never get away from that odious place, and the train seemed so full. There is room for me here, really?" looking round at Percy's scattered belongings with a touch of alarm.

"Yes; there is only my brother," said Lilla.

"How providential! What a place this is to get away from! I never stopped here before; but something happened yesterday in Paris which put me out dreadfully, and I felt too ill, and too cross, to start early in the morning, so I came as far as Amiens in the afternoon. Such a stupid thing to do. I had to leave my poor maid in Paris; she was ill—left her with a friend, you know—and then my—well, my escort disappointed me, and I couldn't sleep last night—and really, do you know

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that ever since this train came in I have been wandering up and down trying to find a carriage.

Lilla was not a talkative girl. After doing what she could for the lonely lady, and listening with sufficient politeness to her history, she fell back into her own grave silence, and watched the platform till she saw Percy coming back. The stranger thought, "What a severe face! The girl is unhappy, I believe; but I like her, too. Now that is the sort of girl——"

Captain Jones's arrival at the door disturbed these meditations. He hesitated a moment, while his sister looked at him gravely. Then he said: "Give me my coat and things, will you? I am going to smoke;" and he took himself off to another carriage.

When he was gone, the strange lady began to talk to Lilla, who, in spite of herself, had to respond to these advances. There was something very pleasant, though not very wise, about her companion, who chattered of France and Paris, and abused England, and said a great many things that Lilla totally disagreed with.

"Oh, yes, many of the French manners and customs are most superior to ours," said this lady, talking so fast that Lilla—English to the backbone—could not contradict her. "Their marriages, for instance—how sensible they are! and how happy!"

"No, horrible. I can't bear them!" exclaimed Lilla; but her companion hardly seemed to hear this.

"Of course," she said, "people's friends and relations know them better than they know themselves. Well, what a comfort not to be allowed to throw themselves away on the first person they take a fancy to. Oh dear, what nonsense! Two silly children without a penny, binding themselves down to a life of misery, finding out too late that they don't suit each other in the least. And if they were French everything would be arranged easily and carefully—money and all the rest of it. Frenchmen never make stupids of themselves. I wish my nephew was a Frenchman!"

She said this half to herself, and sighed. Then she looked at Lilla. "Yes," she said, "I am in great trouble."

Lilla was looking at her with an earnest interest which was certainly encouraging. There was a kind of wistfulness in her eyes, and she said: "But one's relations don't know what is best for one. I am quite sure of that."

"Well," said the lady after a pause, smiling very prettily, "if I happened to be your grandmother I think we should disagree about that. However, we all speak from our own experience. Now, I have a nephew, who at this moment is driving me quite mad by his detestable obstinacy. He has fallen in love with some girl I never saw or heard of, and wants to marry her at once. Now, listen. It is really a relief to me to tell somebody, and I'm sure you are sympathising and kind."

Lilla shook her head a little, but the stranger smiled and went on. "I don't want to boast of what I have done for Jack, but I must tell you, that you may judge between us. He has never had any money, and never will have any, except what I give him. I paid for his education, which was an utter farce from beginning to end. He never passed a single examination; failed in everything he tried for, simply from idleness, for I don't think he is naturally stupid. Idleness, ingratitude, selfishness.

"Now he coolly tells me that he is going to be married, and, of course, expects me to support his wife as well as himself, for she has nothing. Some stray girl he met abroad; no doubt as odious as English girls abroad generally are. Our tempers are neither of them sweet, and I must tell you that Jack and I were very angry with each other. He declared that he expected nothing from me, which was utter falsehood and nonsense. So we wished each other good-bye. He may go his way, and I shall go mine. I shall certainly do nothing for him, and I think he knows it. As to my money, it shall go to somebody who deserves it."

She looked Lilla straight in the face as she spoke. There certainly was something very strange and unusual in this outpouring from an utter stranger. In theory, there was nothing Lilla disliked more. She hated effusive people, who talked of their own concerns, and thought they must interest everybody. But here was a contradiction. This woman's talk really interested Lilla. She listened attentively to every word; odd little thrills seemed to run through her as the story went on; her eyes deepened, and a faint colour rose in her pale cheeks. Lilla was at her prettiest now, and the stranger, looking at her, almost forgot her own troubles in admiration.

"What do you think?" she said, after a minute's silence. "I am right, am I not?"

"I don't know," said Lilla, with much more hesitation than was usual with her. "You couldn't expect, could you, that your nephew would give up the girl, if they really cared for each other? Perhaps she is a much nicer girl than you think."

"Oh, no, no; I don't believe it. Of course he says she is lovely. He wanted to show me her photograph, but I wouldn't look at it. But don't you understand—even if she was an angel—he has no business to think of marrying at all. And he has engaged himself without even the politeness of consulting me. *You* would never forget all your duties and principles in that sort of way."

"Yes, indeed I should. I do," said Lilla quickly, with a sudden blush. "My brother thinks me just as bad—just as obstinate and ungrateful, as you think your nephew."

"Then I am sure your brother is mistaken." The stranger spoke as quickly and decidedly as Lilla herself, but with such a look and tone of kindly sweetness that Lilla suddenly moved from her own place, and sat down beside her. Almost directly her new friend took her hand, and held it while they talked together. This sympathy, so strangely met, brought Lilla's troubles rushing to her lips and eyes. She had no mother, no kind, foolish aunt, no one but a married elder sister, from whom she expected nothing but blame. Percy thought she had been making a terrible little silly of herself, and the world in general was sure to agree with him.

She told her fellow-traveller that she and Percy had been in the South of France, and had there met a young man sketching, who meant to be an artist. They had seen a great deal of him, and at last, one day—but Lilla did not enter much into her version of the old story.

Lilla's lover had no money; he had no profession; but he was extremely, brilliantly clever, dressed beautifully, and was sure to be a great artist some day. He seemed to think that some relations might help him a little just at first, and Lilla thought her brother Percy, who was unmarried, and well off, might do the same for her. But Percy took a very different view of the subject. He did not at all share his sister's faith in the artist's future; he wanted her to marry a friend of his own, a rich man, who admired her.

"Percy wants me to write to him, and tell him—but no, that I will never do," said Lilla, sadly and strongly. "I see we shall have to wait for years. I told him I thought so. He didn't seem to think so—but anyhow, he knows it will make no difference to me."

So they went on talking as their train hurried through France. Lilla could hardly believe, afterwards, that she had actually told all her history, and poured out her whole heart to a person she had never met in her life before; but then this was such a wonderful person. She began to realise what she had done when they saw the sandhills and the sea, and then rushed on to Boulogne through the green *bruyères* and the fir trees.

"I ought not to have talked like this; but you have been so very kind and I really am unhappy," she said.

Then the strange woman took her hand again.

"My dear, you must not be unhappy. Trust me and don't be unhappy. I think I see a way out of your troubles, only don't give in, whatever you do."

In spite of her beating heart and her heavy eyelids, Lilla could hardly help laughing at her friend's inconsistency.

"Give in! Oh, no!" she said. "But I'm afraid you are much more hopeful than I am."

"We shall see. In the meantime will you give me your address?"

"Yes; thank you so much. I do hope we shall meet again." Lilla hastily pulled a letter out of her pocket.

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Then she coloured a little, and hesitated. Then she took the letter out of the envelope, and gave the envelope to her friend, saying half aloud, "I have no other."

Looking at the letter in her hand, and putting it back in a safe place, she missed the first expression on her friend's face, which was that of extreme astonishment, almost anger, quickly succeeded by intense amusement.

"Miss Lilla Jones," she read out, in such an extremely odd voice that Lilla was startled.

"Is there anything wrong?" she said.

"No, my dear, nothing. Only your direction in the South of France is not of much use to me."

"Oh, I'm so sorry. Please give it me back. I can find a scrap of paper, I dare say."

"No, no; I like this. Write your English address on it—there's plenty of room."

"And—may I have yours?" asked Lilla, when she had obeyed.

"No; it doesn't matter about me. You shall hear from me. We shall know all about each other in time. Here we are. Thank you for a miserable journey turned into a happy one."

"You have comforted me very much," said Lilla gratefully; but she was rather at a loss to understand her friend's meaning. The happiness of the journey, to all seeming, had only consisted in having the knowledge of another person's troubles added to her own.

CHAPTER II.

JACK, as his aunt, Mrs. Lindsay, always called him—this was only a pet name, the world in general knowing him as Reginald Carr—Jack was very much surprised at receiving a kind letter from his aunt, a few days after she had cast him off for ever. The beginning of the letter was kind, at least; the latter part seemed totally unreasonable.

Jack was staying on at the hotel in Paris, where he had come on purpose to meet his aunt, and to break the news of his engagement. From former experience he had quite expected that his aunt, after storming a little, would kiss him and give her consent. He was then going to take her back to England, where his further plans would soon arrange themselves. But her horrid obstinacy had knocked everything on the head. Jack did not know what to do with himself, and so, for the present, was finding a little amusement in Paris. He was very painfully conscious that he could not marry on nothing. At the same time he could not possibly give up the girl with whom he was so much in love. He was furiously angry with his aunt.

Jack stood on the hearthrug.

In this letter she invited, or rather ordered, him to come to London at once, naming a particular day and hour when she desired to see him. She went on to say that she had met the person to whom she intended to leave all her money. "But there is still a loophole for you," she wrote; "you do not deserve anything at all; but come here at once, and we shall see whether we understand each other any better than we did."

"Hang the old woman and her money! What on earth does she mean?" said Jack, with other exclamations of the same kind. "She's mad. I wish she and her money had never been heard of. It's too bad, to bring a fellow up to expect a thing, and then disappoint him after all. Who has she picked up now, I wonder! I'll be hanged if I go. I'd require to pack at once."

He did go, however, not being quite such a proud and rash young man as he supposed himself, having also a private reserve of love and respect for his aunt, however ungrateful his words and thoughts might be—but he went in a very bad temper. He left his luggage, which was immense, at Charing Cross Station, and drove in a hansom to his aunt's house, not being sure whether she meant him to stay with her. She said nothing about that, but received him kindly, and gave him luncheon, for he had arrived early in the day, according to the sudden and queer request.

There was something very odd about the old lady. Jack, who was inclined just then to take a dark view of all things, thought she was going out of her mind.

"Well, you have told me nothing about your journey. Was it rough? Had you pleasant companions?"

"Yes, awfully rough. Don't know; didn't look at them; they were Frenchmen, mostly. By-the-bye, how did you get on?"

"Ah, by-the-bye, the first time I ever travelled from Paris to London alone. Well, I stopped at Amiens, you know—a great mistake, and yet it wasn't. I believe it was one of the best things I ever did in my life."

"How was that?" said Jack, trying to seem interested.

"Well, from Amiens to Boulogne—on to London, in fact—I had the most charming fellow-traveller. She helped me, she took care of me, she did everything for me; she told me all her history, and we became friends for life. I found that there was only one thing she wanted to make her happy, and I determined that she should have it."

"What?" said Jack suspiciously. He guessed what was coming now, and thought himself most abominably treated. Not even one of the Lindsays, her husband's relations! but an accidental woman picked up in a railway carriage! Some sharp, designing creature, who had got round his aunt and made a fool of her. It was no surprise when Mrs. Lindsay answered his question—"Plenty of money."

Jack threw himself back in his chair. He tried to look as if this was nothing to him; but scowled hideously at a picture over the chimneypiece.

"It's a common complaint, and a difficult cure," he said. "Well, go on, Aunt. Is she French or English, young or old?"

"English, young, and very pretty," said his aunt. "At least, I am sure you would say so."

"I bet you I shouldn't," replied Jack. "I haven't that desperate admiration for every girl I meet."

"I know that, but I know the sort of thing you do admire. Now, Jack, suppose that you and I have a bet on the subject—ten pounds, if you like."

"No, thank you, I can't afford it," said Jack, smiling grimly. "Besides, I'm not likely to see her, unless she has taken up her abode with you. And you can't expect me to like the notion of her—particularly."

"I am sorry for you, Jack, really," said Mrs. Lindsay. "But it's all your own fault. I have made up my mind, and I can't change it now."

"No, so it seems," said Jack, getting up and shrugging his shoulders. "Why didn't you let me stay in Paris?"

"A very bad place for you. Besides, as I told you, there is a loophole. I will give you another chance."

"What's that?"

"You may marry her," said Mrs. Lindsay abruptly; and then she went to the other end of the room, and stood there fidgeting with some flowers, turning her back to her nephew.

Jack stood on the hearthrug, with his hands in his pockets.

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First he laughed an unflattering laugh to Mrs. Lindsay's new favourite; then he said: "Did you really send for me from Paris to tell me that, Aunt?"

For a moment she seemed to misunderstand him in some way. She turned round quickly, with an exclamation on her lips: "You don't——." But then she stopped herself as quickly, for poor Jack looked angry and dejected. "Well, you need not be scornful," she said. "My friend is very much too good for you. How do you know that she will have you, after all?"

"I don't see how you know it, either," he said. "But she won't be asked, so it doesn't matter."

"Look here, my dear Jack. You are ruining yourself; you are losing your last chance. The fact is simply this: if you marry anyone but this friend of mine, I won't leave you a penny. You may go your own way; you may go to the dogs, if you like."

"Thank you, I will," said Jack. He walked towards the door, but then he turned round again and faced his aunt, looking extremely grave.

Just then came a visitor's knock.

"Here she is," said Mrs. Lindsay. "I asked her to come and see me this afternoon. Well, Jack, then you have quite made up your mind; you won't marry her? Perhaps it was too much to expect. Don't rush out of that door; you will meet her. Go out this way, into the study; wait there for ten minutes, and then come back to me. I should like you to see her, though of course my plan won't do."

"I don't want to see her. I'll go off at once, thank you."

"Jack, you will do no such thing. You need not stay in the room. You need only come in and say good-bye to me, if you like. You may be just as rude and sulky as you please—but I want you to see her. Go!"

Jack fled, for the visitor was coming in. It was Miss Lilla Jones. She looked very pretty, and very well dressed. Mrs. Lindsay received her with eager kindness, and after thanking her many times for coming, began to talk seriously.

"I have been thinking a great deal about you," she said, "since we parted, and if you will let me, I am going to speak very plainly. First of all, my dear, it will never do for you to marry a poor man."

Lilla smiled, coloured, and looked at her rather sadly.

"Your brother is perfectly right, you know. It is a dreadful look-out for you. Now listen to me. I told you in the train the other day how much I liked French marriages, and how wise I thought them. Do you remember? Well, now I have taken it into my head to arrange a marriage for you—one to which your brother can't possibly object. I want you to give up all your wild ideas, and to be good and sensible, and to make me and all your friends very happy—by marrying my nephew."

Lilla's face fell in a wonderful manner. She stared at Mrs. Lindsay in blank astonishment, and the only thought that crossed her mind was, "Poor dear thing, she is crazy!" She began to wish herself safe out of the house, was in fact a little frightened, and did not in the least know what to say.

"But you know——I told you——" she stammered out. "I thought you understood——"

"I understood perfectly," said Mrs. Lindsay smiling. "But I have just been talking to my nephew. I told him that he must give up all his nonsensical ideas, and offer himself to you. My dear, if you will marry him I will leave all my money to him, and allow him fifteen hundred a year now. But if you won't, I intend to cut him off with a shilling, but I think in that case I shall leave everything to you. There's only one difficulty."

"More than one, I should think—but what is the one?" asked Lilla, as quietly as she could.

"He declares he will have nothing to do with you. He will not give up that girl he met in France. But I think, when he sees you——"

"Please, Mrs. Lindsay, don't let us have any more talk like this," said Lilla, getting up, with scarlet cheeks and eyes shining with surprise and anger. "You can't be serious in anything you are saying. You can't mean it—but your whole plan is perfectly impossible. How could I accept your money—a perfect stranger—and as to—I never heard such extraordinary things in my life."

Mrs. Lindsay watched her for a moment, and an odd convulsion passed over her face. Then she got up, came across to the girl, took her face between her hands and kissed her, looking at her with such happy, loving eyes that Lilla's tears were checked.

"I really am fiendish!" said Mrs. Lindsay, and she sprang across to the door, opened it, and called Jack.

He came slowly forward from the study.

"Come in, Jack," said his aunt. "Here is my friend. You need not be at all afraid of meeting her. She will have nothing whatever to say to you, and you are exactly in the same state of mind towards her. But you both think you have to do with an old madwoman, so please indulge her last fancy by shaking hands. Jack! You are forgetting yourself, sir! This is disgraceful!"

For Jack cried out, "Lilla!" and Lilla gave a little scream, and they did not meet at all as strangers, but as lovers long parted, while Mrs. Lindsay, whose remonstrances were useless, walked away smiling to the window.

Hitherto the most important thing that occurred on August 2nd in the world's history was the Battle of Blenheim, 1704. But what was this paltry battle compared with what will happen on the next Second of August?

ON THAT DAY WE START A NEW SERIES OF

SHORT STORIES.

WE ARE increasing the number of pages from 16 to 32. WE ARE issuing the paper in a much more convenient and attractive form. WE ARE doubling the amount of reading matter. WE ARE NOT increasing the price.

THE CLEVEREST WRITERS WILL WRITE FOR SHORT STORIES,
" " ARTISTS " ILLUSTRATE " "
AND EVERYBODY WHO HAS HIS OR HER HEAD SCREWED ON THE RIGHT WAY WILL READ SHORT STORIES.

During the last few months SHORT STORIES has just doubled its Circulation. There is a rage for the "short story" at present, and it is while this rage is prevalent that we want to show we can give the best pennyworth of it that four farthings can procure. Hence the alterations and improvements.

REMEMBER THE FIRST OF THE NEW SERIES IS TO BE OBTAINED AUGUST 2.

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No one who had driven through the lodge gate and had noticed the merry face of Ellen, the gatekeeper, would be likely soon to forget it. She usually wore a pink calico dress, which was always scrupulously neat, and fitted her trim figure to a T. Her ribbons were pink, her cheeks pink, and the children declared that her hair was pink also. It was really a very pretty shade of light red, and it crinkled in a bewitching way.

What a charming picture she made, framed by the arched window, the grey stone covered closely with luxuriant ivy! She was always smiling, and had a gay word of *repartee* for her fellow-servants; a deferential but cheerful greeting for her superiors; jokes and amusing stories for the children; and when all alone she sang the jolliest Irish songs and ballads, with a laughing lilt in her voice, which was so irresistible that the guests at the villa often sat for hours on the veranda, where, unknown to her, they could hear Ellen sing.

Altogether she was the most light-hearted, merry little woman you ever saw, and we were all surprised to see her appear on Sunday in full widow's weeds. We met her just returning from church, and remarked on the exuberance of health and spirit displayed by the sable-robed figure, though we did not at first recognise it. Through the folds of the heavy crape I saw a glint of the red-gold hair, and there was something in her buoyant step which recalled the measure of those lilting choruses. I believe she was thinking them over, and keeping time to their beat and swing as she walked.

I suspected at once that this was no ordinary widow bowed down by a heavy weight of woe, and when O'Flaherty, the coachman, turned on his box and threw her a kiss as we passed, we also turned and saw the crape veil thrown back and Ellen's rosy face framed by a coquettish widow's cap.

"Is Ellen in grief?" I asked.

"Not at all," my hostess answered, laughing; "she is only in deep mourning, and enjoys it very much."

"Some distant relative, I presume, who has left her money?"

"On the contrary; it is in honour of her husband, to whom she was very tenderly attached, and for whom she has resisted the most persistent attentions of lovers through two long years of widowhood. Is it not so, O'Flaherty?"

The privileged coachman coughed and chuckled. "It's about so, mum," he admitted.

"Ellen a widow!" I exclaimed. "Why, she is the merriest one I ever saw. You are talking in riddles; will you be kind enough to explain your meaning?"

"Ellen must tell you," my friend replied; and that afternoon I strolled down to the lodge, intent on unravelling the mystery. Ellen wore a neat black sateen, flecked with a tiny white figure resembling snowflakes Muslin cuffs were folded back from her wrists in the most approved style. Some violets and a black folded handkerchief were tucked in her belt. Ellen was evidently still sustaining her character as a bewitching little widow. We had had some previous conversation, and I soon made an opportunity of telling her that I was sorry to hear of her bereavement.

"Oh, yes, mum," she admitted, "I felt very bad intirely—for a spell. It's a dreadful thing, mum, to lose one's husband, and I hope you will never suffer the likes."

I felt not a little indignant at Ellen's show of grief, for the minx looked so complacent in her widow's weeds that I was sure that whatever she might have suffered was more than made up to her by a sense of their becomingness. I fancied, too, that as I entered the lodge, I had seen O'Flaherty, the coachman, sneak out of the back door, and I could not help saying rather spitefully: "Time brings consolation, Ellen, and I should not be surprised if you married a second time."

A look of real pain and indignation came into Ellen's face. "Niver, mum! Do you think I could marry anyone else but my own Terry? Shure, it's mistaken you are; the saints forgive you! Why, we niver quarrelled but once, and that was the day I lost him. It's many's the bitter tear I've shed for that."

I saw that Ellen was in earnest, and felt that I did not quite understand this odd mixture of loyalty and vanity. "Tell me about it," I said, as kindly as I could. "How did you lose your husband?"

"It was this way, mum," Ellen explained. "When we were first married, I was waitress at the house, an' Terence was under-gardener, an' oh, mum, we were that happy an' comfortable until the misthress' sister came to spend the summer here, an' brought a peck of misery for us in all them thrunks of hers, bad luck to her! Mrs. Delacey her name was, a stoilish young widder, who never wasted many tears on her husband, but made up for that with her bumbazines or her grinny-dines, an' the crapes you could pull through a gould ring; an' the silky stuff they call foolhardy."

"Foolhardy? I never heard of any such material, Ellen. I have it! You must mean foulard."

"Well, be it fool hard or fool soft, I know not. I only know that she made a fool of ivery man that came nigh her, the craythe r! an' I was as foolish as a man over her gowns. I unpacked her dresses for her, an' hung 'em up in the cupboard, an' that avenin' I was goin' on to Terence about thim gowns till I misthrust he was sick of hearin' me, for he answered me crosslike. You know how men is, mum; the misthress tells me you have a husband yourself. Well, I niver took no warnin', but kept on tellin' him how the butler tould me that whin Mrs. Delacey wore her black Brussels net, with the black pearls on her snowy neck, at the hunt ball, the Juke of what's-his-name, he says: 'Who is that raquiem in lace?' says he, 'shinin' out like a snow-flake forninst a chimney-stack.'

"'What's a raquiem?' says Terry.

"'It's a song they sing at a wake,' says I, 'an' the Juke said it must be very flatterin' to her husband to know that such a lovely young craythe r was mournin' for him in such foine style. Mournin' is becomin',' says I, 'I'd like to wear it myself. It must be a great consolation to a widder. If you should die, Terry,' says I, 'I wouldn't spare the money on black stuff for you.'

"'You'd be glad enough for the chance,' says he, 'an' that stuck-up butler, too. Niver you let me hear you speak of him agin', or it's the four eyes of you both that I'll put in mournin',' says he.

"It was the butler, mum, that made the trouble betwixt us more than the mournin'. The misthress niver would have had a man in the house doin' a woman's work, but Mrs. Delacey she brought him from the city along with her new-fangled fashions, an' shure he needed more waitin' on than any of the aristocracy, orderin' round the other servants an'

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drivin' the cook wild wid the French dishes he was always a-suggestin'.

"But mind you, he didn't order me at all, at all. Quite contrairy, the villain; he was always blarney-in' me hair an' me eyes, an' sayin' as how he would like to see me in one of Mrs. Delacey's dresses, for he was sure I would be purtier in it than her leddyship herself. An' whither it was that he axed his misthress for me I don't know, but what did Mrs. Delacey do but give me one of her old black gowns.

As I entered the lodge.

"Now, though I was dyin' to see myself in it, I was that feared of Terry that I didn't dare put it on, until one day it happened that the masther sent him to the Park with one of the horses, an' he was to be gone three days, an', as good luck would have it, my third cousin's wife had just died, so av coorse I had the opportunity I wanted of wearin' the black dress to the funeral. Now whin we started for the buryin', who should I see at the door with the masther's trap but the butler.

"'An' will you ride with me, Ellen?' said he. 'Shure I've come all the way to take you, seein' I knew Terry was away,' says he.

"'Oh,' says I, 'I'm not goin' to the buryin',' says I, for I didn't like to ride with him at all, at all.

"'Thin let me take you home,' says he, 'for it's a good piece to the house, an' you're tired with footin' it here.'

"'I'll not be afther going home just yet,' says I. 'I'll stay wid the childer an' get supper against my cousin comes home from the cimetery,' says I, thinkin' that with that he would be off without me. But this was the very worst thing I could have done, for he just waited, the craythur, an' with the people bein' late back from the buryin', and insistin' that I should stay to supper, it was near dark whin I started for home. An' there was the butler a-waitin' for me, but I wouldn't ride with him, but just took my cousin's eldest boy for company, an' cut through the pine woods a short way. But, as bad luck would have it, I came out on the highway an' sent the boy back just afther the butler, who had driven round by the road an' had stopped at every public on the way, passed by, so that he drove through the lodge gate not two minutes before I came home, an' who should sit there but Terry, looking as black as a thunder-cloud.

"Well, I was surprised enough to see him, an' he saw it.

"'So I've caught you,' says he, 'you've been ridin' with the butler,' an' the more I denied it, the madder he got. 'An' what do you mane by dressin' yourself up like a widdy?' says he. 'If you want to be a widdy, it's not I that will be hinderin' you.'

"With that he took his hat, an' left the lodge. It had looked like rain all the day, an' there came on a fearful storm in the night, an' I dared not put foot outside the house, thinkin' he'd come back in the mornin'. But when two days went by, an' he niver came, the masther came to the lodge to see where he was, an' there was great huntin' an' searchin for him in all the neighbourhood. All we could find was that he had taken a little boat to row across the bay, an' most likely the squall had overturned it, for it was found floatin' far out, bottom upwards, but Terry or his body we never found.

"Thim were the sorrowfulest days o' my life, mum. The misthress was very kind to me, an' come often to see me, an' wanted me to stay all the time at the house, instead of spendin' my nights so lonely at the lodge. But I wouldn't do it, for I thought maybe Terry was not dead, after all, an' if he came back some avenin' he should find the windy lighted an' the supper waitin'.

"'My poor Ellen,' says the misthress, 'don't desave yourself, for he is dead for sure an' certain.'

"In my heart I was near belavin' her, but I kept up courage on the outside until the end of the summer, whin the family wint away to town, an' left the place all lonely for the winter. The butler called last of all, bringing with him a great bundle.

"'This came by parcel post for you from Lunnon,' says he.

"I cut the string, an' I saw it was a parcel of black gowns.

"'Whoiver sent these to me?' says I.

"'Belike it is Mrs. Delacey,' says the butler. 'She wint down to Lunnon a week ago,' says he.

"With that I burst out cryin', an' tied thim up again, an' tould him to carry thim back to his misthress.

"'You can't belave that Terry is still livin,' says he. 'An' you ought to do him the dacent thing by dressin' as a widdy ought. A great consolation you'll find it,' says he, 'an' I'll put a weed in my own hat to show my respect.'

"'An' how do I know that I am a widdy? Shure its not the likes of you, Dinnis O'Leary, that will make me belave he's dead,' says I.

"'Shure, who will you belave?' says he. 'It's not me alone, but the whole community says he's dead.'

"'I'll not belave anyone but Terry,' says I. 'Not till Terry himself tells me that he's dead will I belave myself a widdy.'

"'Shure, I niver before wished the appayrence of a ghost,' says the butler, 'but here's to the speedy comin' of the sperrit' Mrs. Terry, an' whin next summer comes, I thrust I may find you settin' your pretty cheeks off with a crape veil like a raysonable Christian resigned to the doin's of Providence.'

"With that he took himself and the bundle off, an' it was a long an' lonesome winter spent in the little lodge, with no neighbours but the dairyman and his family, who stayed to take care of the cows, for the other servants had gone to the city with the family. I earned some money helpin' make the butter, an' I was puttin' it by whin I heard that Terry's ould feyther and mither were to be sent to the poor-house, an' I had thim brought to the lodge, an' I nursed the old feyther to his grave, an' the old mither back to her health again.

"Thin the spring came, but I can't say that I was glad to see it, for I knew that the family would come back, an' the butler, an' that he would be afther botherin' me again. An' bother me he did, an' so did the whole parish, for first he sent a stone-cutter man to me to put up a gravestone to Terry, an' the praste himsel' tould me that I ought to be havin' prayers said to get him out of Purgatory, an' the inn-keeper brought me a bill that Terry had been runnin' up unbeknownst to me for whiskey, an' I saw that it began from the time that the butler came to the house, an' like as not it was of the throuble betwixt us.

"An' while I was castin' about in my mind which I should pay first, the inn-keeper or the praste, and how I should get the money to pay either, comes the butler again; an', 'Mrs. Terry,' says he, 'sure it's little we all see you care for your husband's mimory, or you wouldn't grudge him the bit crape that tells of mournin'. Thim that mourns shall be comforted, but maybe it's right you are, for faith Terry was not worth the grievin'.'

"With that I grew angry.

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"'An', says I, 'it's none of *your* comfortin' I want in any case, Dinnis O'Leary, an' what nade have I to shpend on the mournin' whin my heart is in crape for him all the day long, an' it's better I should save his credit in this wurrld an' the nixt by payin' his debts an' the toll rates from Purgatory than shpendin' on my own dressin'.'

"With that the crayther saw that hope had wellnigh lift me, an', says he, 'What's the need of your slavin' in this way, Mrs. Terry? Terry had his life insured in your favour, an' there's a matter of a hundred and twenty pounds awaitin' your call, which will clear off all debts, an' lave you a rich widdy. An' what's the money got to do with your dressin', ayther? For here is this bundle of black dresses, which Mrs. Delacey did not send you at all, at all, for by the same token she knows nothin' about thim.'

"'Thin *you* bought thim yourself,' says I, 'an it's not I that will be afther acceptin' such a prisent from you.'

"But he denied it by all the saints, an' left the bundle in the door, an' I put it on the top shelf in the cupboard, I still mistrustin' that he had bought thim himsel', an' that the truth would out at last. Well, thin, I considered an' considered the matter of the insurance, but when I thought that if I had to shwear, as the butler said I must, to get the money, that to the best of my belafe an' wish that Terry was dead to all intints and purposes, dead for sure an' all, wid no hope of any resurrection, so far as this wurrld was concerned, it seemed to me that I was sellin' the bit of hope that I had lived all these months on, an' I couldn't do it.

"So, how I don't know, but that summer I lived through, an' a woeful one it was. I paid Terry's debts, an' I had the masses said, an' I was considerin' an illigant marble shtone for the buryin' ground, the which I meant to have earned to pay for by New Year's, for the misthress had lift me plenty of work to do.

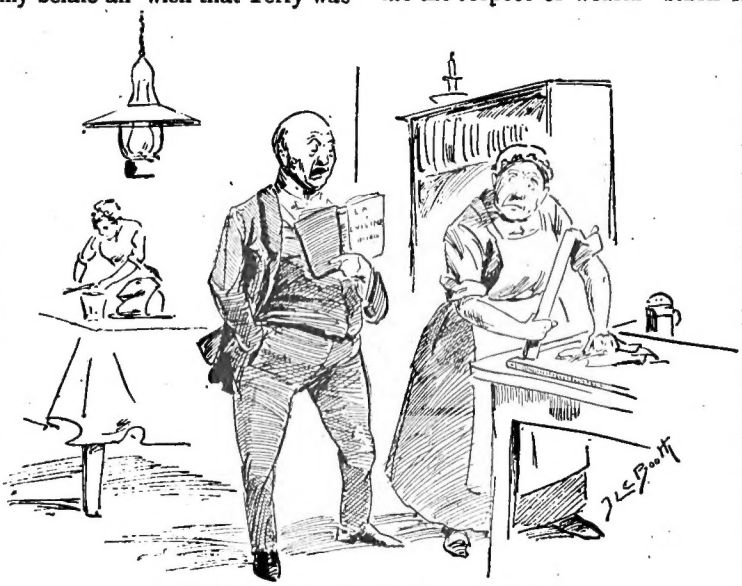
"Whin a gurl in Ireland, the nuns had taught me to embroider an' to mark linen, an' the misthress had lift me a pile of sheets, an' pillycases, an' pleasant it was to sit by the foire wid the ould mither, an' think that with every letther I was makin' I was payin' for the cuttin' of another on Terry's tombstone. An' I determined not to stint the apytaph, but to give him a good long one, settin' down all his vartues, an' it should read somethin' like this:

"'HERE LIES THE BODY OF
TERRY O'FLAHERTY.
WHICH IS NOT BURIED HERE, HAVIN' NIVER
BEEN FOUND, HE HAVIN' BEEN CAP-
SIZED ONE DARK NIGHT IN
A WHERRY.'

"(It was more like a dory, but I said 'wherry' for the poetry.)

"'He was the kindest an' best of husbands an' fellows, barrin' a bit quick-tempered an' a trifle jealous. His widdy erects this monyment as a New Year's prisent to testify her woe, an' that she will never belave him dead till he comes an' tells her so.'

"It was a beautiful idea, but I niver had the monyment put up, the raison bein' that one night, as I worked by the fire, an' the ould mither nodded in the chair, I see a face at the windy, an' I held out my arms at it, an' called 'Terry, Terry!' an' fainted away, an' whin I came to my right sinses, an' was wonderin' whether it was Terry's ghost come to tell me I was a widdy, I felt myself held in his two strong arms, an' by the same token I knew it was Terry himself.



"Drivin' the cook wild wid the French dishes.'

"Well, we laughed, an' we cried, an' we hugged each other, an' we went nearly crazy, an' he tould me how it was wild he was the night he went away, an' how he had rowed out to a sailing vessel that was bound for Calcutty by the way of the Cape of Good Hope, determined for to lave me free to be a widdy, if I loiked; but how that the ould love and the longin' were too strong for him intirely, an' he set out to come back again, but was detained by a matter of two or three shipwrecks, an' so he had not touched shore till that very mornin'.

"An' how all the way he had been tormented wid the fear that I might have belaved him dead, an' have married the butler, an' he had bethought him that he would look in at the windy, an' if he saw me dressed in black, he would belave me still a widdy, an' come; but whin he saw me in pink, it near took his sinses away, for he thought sure I had done mournin' for him, an' how he was about to turn away whin I saw him an' called him, an' thin come in he had to, right through the sash of the windy, even were it to murther the butler.

"'But how is it,' says Terry, 'that you've not been doin' me the respect of wearin' black for me as a widdy should, an' mournin' so becomin' to you?' says he.

"'Whisht, Terry,' says the ould mither, 'what money had she to buy mournin', whin she's been buryin' your feyther, an' payin' my docther, an' your bills, an' the praste for prayin' you out of Purgatory, let alone the illigant new tombstone she was preparin' for a New Year's prisent,' says she.

"'A New Year's prisent!' says Terry, 'an' I in such a hurry to come home that divil a bit of a prisent did I bring her but myself. Did you niver get the illigant gowns I sint you from Lunnon? The ship put in there before we set out on our voyage, an' I thought what a pleasure you would take intirely wid wearin' of the weeds.'

"'Oh, Terry!' says I, 'an' was it you that sint them? I thought they were from the butler, an' here they've been lyin' all the time, for niver a rag of them would I put on.'

"With that he had me put on one of the dresses, an' he said it was too bad I should have deprived myself of one of the privileges of my widdyhood whin I had the chance, especially as he was now convinced that this was the *only* privilege I cared for, an' now his comin' home must not be a hindrance to my pleasure, an' I must wear them for his sake, as they were the only New Year's prisent he had for me.

"An' when I came to consider, it seemed only right an' proper I should do so, for shure no man deserved more to be mourned for, an' here was a matter of nearly two years, when I ought to have mourned for him, that I didn't, an' shure hadn't I given my word to the butler that I would wear mournin' for Terry, when Terry came back an' tould me to?

"So that is the explanation of the whole conundrum, an' you may ask Terry himself if it isn't a merry mournin' to him as well as to me."

"Shure, mum, it's that same," said Terence O'Flaherty; and the coachman, who had lounged into the lodge in time to hear the last part of the recital, took his little wife upon his knee, and, imprinting a rousing smack on her rosy cheek, added: "an' it's not permitted to every man to have the pleasure of consolin' his own widdy."

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THE OUTLAWS' TREASURE

SUMMARY.

The mail train has been robbed between Cornwall and La Grange stations, and £20,000 worth of gold stolen by a gang of desperadoes, headed by two brothers named Mulligan. Two passengers on the train—Adolph Squirrek, *alias* Smith, a detective tracking the Mulligans, and Fred Weldon, a young lawyer—who have struck up an acquaintance on the way, alight at Somerville, where the former stopped at the "Drover," and the latter at his mother's house. During the night a message comes to say that Judge Woodland's horse has come back alone, and Weldon, together with Squirrek and two other men set out to find him, and discover one of Mulligan's confederates lying senseless on the road. The man, who had made an unsuccessful attempt on the life of the judge, is sentenced to forty years' imprisonment. At Judge Woodland's Weldon meets a Spaniard named Alvarido Almanaz, and the two men become rivals for the love of Florence, the judge's daughter. Weldon is inveigled to a lonely bridge near Cornwall, and disappears. Squirrek pays a fruitless visit to the spot. Squirrek arouses the citizens of Cornwall, who make their way to the outlaws' hiding-place. One outlaw is found and killed, and the cabin is set fire to. Squirrek discovers a scrap of paper with the following cryptogram: "1——0——1. Cfujk't Bsdfj 50zct Mpqug Vmeds sid X gjsf Nbg." He afterwards falls in with the two remaining outlaws and has them arrested.

CHAPTER XX.

LYNCHED!

THE succeeding day was passed without any incident worthy of note, the greater portion of it being spent by me in endeavouring to decipher the writing in my possession. But it was as great a puzzle to me as to Señor Almanaz, and the result of my study was the conviction that I never could be able to fathom its mystery without the help of some one.

In moving through the town during the afternoon I made a rather startling discovery. A plan was brewing, and, in fact, was already perfected, which looked like summary justice being visited upon the heads of the Mulligans. The mayor had only succeeded in lulling the storm—he had not subdued it.

Over a hundred men—numbering the most respectable, and at the same time the most determined people in Somerville—had organised and banded together for the sworn purpose of lynching the prisoners.

Just at dusk I hurried to the mayor's office. He knew of what was going on.

"There is only one way I can stop it," said he.

"What's that?"

"Run them off in the train to the State prison at Alton, where they can be temporarily confined until this danger passes over. All the mobs in the United States couldn't hurt that building."

"But that is fifty miles distant."

"I know it. The express will be along in half an hour; the station-master will be ready. We can slip the two men out the back way, and have them twenty miles out of the town before anyone, except our friends, can suspect what has been done."

"I hope the plan will succeed."

"So do I," said the mayor, rapping his stick on the floor very earnestly. "These lynchings are becoming too common in the West. I confess I have sometimes had some sympathy for the community who have taken the law into their own hands, when the legal authorities were powerless. The Vigilance Committee of San Francisco, a dozen years ago, did a good work, but there is no need for anything of the kind here These men have enjoyed a great immunity heretofore, but it is at end now."

While I, in common with the magistrate, had a great desire to see the majesty of the law sustained. I still felt, what I suspected him of feeling, some sympathy for the multitude that had borne much great wrong. The mayor knew that I was a detective, but had not known that I had headed the crowd that went out of Cornwall a few days before, and visited the island, and I did not think it necessary to tell him.

It was about seven o'clock in the evening that a close carriage drove rapidly from the rear of the gaol towards the station, starting the very instant the whistle of the express train was heard.

The Mulligans were hurried into the train, and followed by four officers and myself. Our exit had attracted no attention, and we felicited ourselves upon the neat manner in which we had outwitted the people, and laughed over the chagrin that they would feel when the trick was discovered.

Our plan was a good one, but we were betrayed, and I am satisfied that one of the police officers accompanying us was the man who did it.

Just as we were nearing Cornwall, and had begun to slacken, the conductor jerked the signal rope for the engine to go through without stopping. He instantly blew the whistle for the loosening of the brakes, and the engine made a leap forward, puffing louder and faster, but in the next ten seconds the whistle was blown again—the signal for the putting on of the brakes being twice repeated—an indication that there was danger ahead—and we began rapidly pulling up.

The crowd greeted me with a cheer.

I arose from my seat and looked out of the window. By the lamps at the station a vast swarming crowd of people could be seen, all swayed by some great, controlling excitement.

I suspected the truth at once, and so did my companions and the prisoners, who turned pale and looked at one another, but did not speak a word. A moment later Jim said:

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They struggled and fought like wild beasts.

"Just loose our hands and give us a show, won't you?"

The officer shook his head.

"It won't do any good; we'll protect you as well as we can."

"Yes; we know what that will amount to," replied the other, with a sneer. "I believe this is some of your work."

The officer leant forward, and hastily unlocked the handcuffs upon the wrists of the prisoners.

At this moment several men entered the car, looked eagerly round for an instant, and then walked towards us. At their head was Lieutenant Belknap. As I resumed my ministerial disguise, he recognised me by a nod.

"I believe these are the men we want," said he, looking sharply at the prisoners.

"Lieutenant," said I, "there is no necessity for this. You know me well enough to believe that I have no wish to befriend these men. But there has been enough of this lynching business; we have them securely guarded, and they cannot escape punishment this time."

"I don't think they can either," was the significant reply. "There is no need of your talking to me, captain; if you want to preach go outside and talk to them."

The crowd was surging and pressing against the windows, struggling with each other to get a sight of the criminals, and demanding that they should be brought out.

It was a critical moment, and I pressed my way outside. As soon as I was seen the crowd recognised me and greeted me with a cheer. Encouraged by this mark of friendship, I mounted the railing at the end of the car, took off my hat, and signified that I wished to address them. Instantly all was still.

"My friends," I called out, in the most impressive voice I could use, "have I not demonstrated to you that I am your friend, and the foe of this gang of desperadoes?"

Tremendous cheers and affirmative responses followed this.

"Well, then, I want you to prove yourselves my friends. We have the last of the Mulligan gang—the two leaders themselves—in secure custody, and in the next hour we intend to have them securely lodged in the State Prison, from which they will never come, except to be remanded back again for the whole term of their natural lives. I can sympathise with you in your exasperation at the long immunity these men have been allowed. But that is now at an end. The gang is extirpated, and there is no call for your taking these two miserable wretches in hand. If I thought there was the least chance of their escaping, I would be the first to demand their summary execution. But they are anxious to get into prison, and you may be sure they will be securely guarded there.

"The news of our doings for the last few days has been telegraphed all over the union, and published in all the papers, and we have been sneered at as a half-civilised community. Let us prove that we never take the law into our own hands except when justice calls us to do so. Disperse like good citizens——"

But I was talking to madmen, and they would hear me no longer. I was interrupted by hootings, and the next moment Lieutenant Belknap and his companions emerged from the train, dragging the Mulligan brothers after them. They struggled and fought like wild beasts, but their ankles were bound together, and, although their arms were free, yet they were powerless to inflict any injury. Lieutenant Belknap and one or two of his comrades handled the men like so many puppets.

Some one had telegraphed to Brampton, apprising the Vigilance Committee of the intended removal of the prisoners, and this explained the gathering.

The officers had made a feeble attempt to protect their charge, but there was little trouble in overcoming them, and they abandoned them into the hands of the mob, who were roused up to a fiendish excitement.

There is no need of describing the scene that followed. The men were given ten minutes in which to make their peace with Heaven, but they sullenly refused to take it, and then a rush was made for the nearest tree.

Shortly afterwards, they were dangling between heaven and earth, the crowd hooting and exulting in their death-throes, the streets lit up with lamps and torches, which made the faces of the multitude look garish and unearthly in the light, while the people swarming back and forth—savage and vengeful as they always are made by such scenes—were forbidding and dangerous in the extreme. Like the fanatics in the French

Shortly afterwards they were dangling between heaven and earth.

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Revolution, they were ready to turn against their friends upon the slightest pretext.

Before swinging the two miserable men off into eternity they were asked to tell what had become of Frederick Weldon; but as they knew nothing was to be gained they kept silent, and the secret perished with them.

I left the train at Cornwall, as there was no call for my going further. I had seen the last of the famous Mulligan Gang, which had infested this portion of the West for a number of years, and the only survivor was "poor Tom Borie," who was in the State penitentiary for twenty years.

I received my large reward for the apprehension of the leaders, and my work with them was finished.

But a more important work lies before me—the solving of the mystery of Frederick Weldon's disappearance, and, after that, the solution of the cipher which I found upon the island, and which I still have in my possession.

And laying down my pen for a time, I now turn to the unravelling of the most singular web of fate which ever came under my observation.

CHAPTER XXI.

TWO PEOPLE HAVE STRANGE DREAMS.

ADOLPH SQUIRREK, the detective, having laid aside his pen for a time, the historian now takes it up.

After the tempest came the lull. There were preliminaries of legal proceedings against the men who had rescued the Mulligans from the officers and lynched them; but the sentiment of the community was so strongly adverse that the step never amounted to anything.

Men plunged anew into the business of life, and almost ceased to talk of the whirlwind of passion that had swept over them a short time before. It was a thing of the past, and the country could never be similarly cursed again.

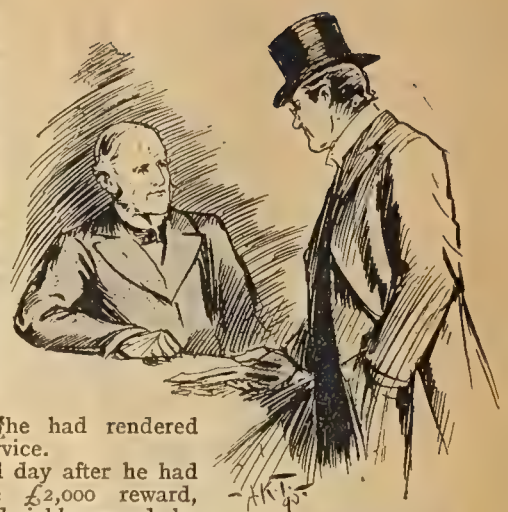
Upon one hearthstone the shadow had fallen. Weldon's mother was stricken to the earth by the loss of her son, and the sympathy of the whole town was with her. She was visited and condoled with by scores, for all knew what a noble child she had lost.

Florence Woodland scarcely let an afternoon pass that she did not sit beside the old lady, and talk with her regarding her boy. She added to the partial parent's encomiums, and did everything in her power to cheer her in her great sorrow. Many little delicacies found their way to her table from the well-stocked larder of Judge Woodland, and in the church, of which she had so many years been a prominent member, she was the burden of prayer and the most tender solicitation.

All that could be done to lighten her sorrow was done, and the innumerable acts of kindness were appreciated by the gentle soul, whose only wish now was to pass quietly down the vale of life, and in the good time of Providence, join her husband and son, who, she felt had preceded her by only a few years to the better land.

Did everything in her power to cheer her in her great sorrow.

ADOLPH SQUIRREK, the detective, performed an act which did his heart credit, and increased the respect in which he was held in the neighbourhood where he had rendered such good service.



Called upon Judge Woodland.

The second day after he had received the £2,000 reward, which he had richly earned, he called upon Judge Woodland, and stated to him that he wished to place the whole amount in his hands for the sole benefit of the widow Weldon.

Seeing the look of surprise upon the old lawyer's face, he said, somewhat impatiently:

"It is hers; it will serve partly to compensate her for the loss of her son. I led him into this business, with the promise of half the profits, and I could never retain a penny of it without feeling that there was blood upon it."

The papers were duly made out, and the noble act of charity performed, after which the detective seemed to breathe more freely. Then Judge Woodland turned to him, and asked abruptly:

"Do you think Frederick Weldon is dead?"

The officer was silent a moment, as though debating with himself.

"No; I believe he is alive."

"What reason have you for thinking so?"

"I cannot explain at present. A few days ago I was certain he still walked the earth; now I only suspect it, but I shall never rest until I have penetrated the mystery regarding him.

"If alive, why is he absent?"

"That is for me to discover."

"Have you acquainted his mother with your belief?"

"No; there is no reason to raise a hope which may only be cruelly disappointed. The whole thing will be settled within a few weeks, one way or another."

"I pray you may be rewarded with success, but I have not the slightest hope that you will."

"I do not expect you to believe it; I only ask that what I have said to you shall be known to no one else."

The judge inclined his head to signify that his promise was given. Then followed a few second's silence, when the detective added:

"I am a plain man, judge, and you will not take offence, therefore, at what I am about to say?"

"I know you too well not to understand you."

"You have quite a frequent visitor to your house in the person of the Cuban Almanaz."

"He calls occasionally."

"Receive him with caution, and do not let him become *too warm a friend* in your family. You understand me?"

"I beg your pardon, I do not."

"Then let it pass," replied Squirrek, somewhat testily.

"Please explain yourself."

"I have given you my word of warning; that ought to be sufficient. If it isn't, don't blame me."

The judge pressed the detective for a further explanation of what he had said; but he steadily refused, feeling that the arrow which he had aimed had been sent home.

A few moments later he bade his host good-evening, and

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withdrew. The judge called the next day at the hotel to see his friend, but was told that he had left with his luggage by the late train on the preceding evening, and he did not suppose he intended returning again, unless—as the fellow facetiously remarked—a new set of Mulligan brothers should spring up, when, he had no doubt, he would be on hand again.

The following morning there was a look of dejection upon the face of Judge Woodland, as he took his seat at the breakfast table, which occasioned the anxious inquiry of his daughter.

"I had a curious dream last night," said he.

"But you don't believe in dreams, father?"

"Of course not; but this was so strange, so vivid that I cannot get it out of my head. It awoke me in the night, and made me uneasy, and then when I dropped asleep I had the same vision directly over again."

"What was it about?"

"Fred Weldon."

Florence started and turned slightly pale, which the parent did not notice.

"I suppose it came from what Smith said last evening——"

"Was he here?" interrupted his daughter.

"Yes; did you not know it?" returned the parent looking up with some surprise. "He was here only a few minutes, and naturally we fell to speaking of young Weldon and his curious fate, and I suppose the thoughts came to the surface again when I was unconscious."

"But I haven't heard your dream."

"I thought it was a clear, moonlight night, and I saw a young man walk rapidly along the railroad from Brampton towards the High Bridge, which you know is over that little stream that is called Devil's Creek. One look at him showed that it was Fred Weldon, and that he was hurrying over the railway as though he were late in keeping some appointment. I saw his face as plainly as I see yours this instant, and noticed that it appeared pale in the moonlight.

"I watched him until he had reached the High Bridge, and then I noticed that he was walking between two men, who had come up beside him like phantoms, although where from it was impossible to imagine. You know, my dear, that the sensation of wonder is never experienced in dreams. No matter how absurd and grotesque everything is, yet in dreamland we always take it as a matter of course.

"While I was looking at the trio they vanished so suddenly out of sight that I was convinced they had fallen through the bridge into the stream below.

"There was nothing extraordinary in such a dream as this, except in its being repeated with a vividness that awoke me with a start, and found me shuddering all over. I slept no more, and found it impossible to get it out of my head.

"Now," continued the judge, in his oracular way, "had I been indulging in a more substantial dinner than usual, had been unwell, or had any remarkable circumstance happened to me yesterday, I could reasonably account for this curious freak of sleep. However, I am so firmly convinced of the meaningless nature of dreams, that the most that I can say is, that this was curious."

There was a look of dejection on the face of Judge Woodland.

There was a silence for a few minutes, during which Florence displayed some emotion, broken finally by her remark:

"I had a dream also."

"Very natural."

"But this was something like yours."

"Ah! about Fred Weldon?" asked the judge eagerly, looking at her in surprise.

Carrying a third with them.

"Yes; about him."

"What was it?"

"It seems to me rather like a continuation of your dream. I know the vicinity of the High Bridge and the stream very well, for we frequently went nutting there when I was a child, and I remember the old chestnut which Fred Weldon used to climb to the very top, and whip the branches off for us.

"Well, I saw three men walking through that ravine. Two of them were bending down and carrying a third with them, and as the moon shone on the face of this man, I saw that it was Fred Weldon's, pale, with the eyes shut, and there was blood on the forehead. Oh, it was terrible!" exclaimed the girl, shuddering and placing her hands over her face, as if to shut out the sight.

"Strange!" remarked the judge, in an undertone, as if speaking to himself, but looking perplexedly at his daughter.

The latter overcame her emotion in a few moments, and then said:

"One of the men carrying him was tall, and his back was towards me, so that I could not see his face, but I knew it was the Cuban, Almanaz——"

"There, by heaven!" exclaimed the old man, slamming his teacup down upon the table, "that's just what I saw, but I didn't think it was worth while to say it!"

Both were so agitated that they ate no more at the breakfast table. They tarried long, discussing their dreams, but the father said nothing of the hope that had been awakened in his breast, less by these dreams than by the words the detective had uttered (taken in conjunction with them) the night before.

The same hope fluttered in the breast of Florence Woodland like the struggles of a dying dove, but she gave it no expression. She felt a longing to see the clear-headed "Mr. Smith," who had called there several times, for it seemed to her that he could help her in her distressful quandary.

CHAPTER XXII.

ANOTHER DREAM, AND SEÑOR ALMANAZ SAYS GOOD-BYE.

WHEN Señor Almanaz was announced at the door in the afternoon, Florence Woodland sent word that she could not see him. A half-hour later she stole quietly out and made her way to the residence of Mrs. Weldon.

The old lady was always glad to see her, but especially on this occasion.

"For I dreamt of Fred last night," she said.

Florence started, as if to make certain that she was not in a dream herself.

"Was it good or bad?" she asked, to divert attention from her own nervousness.

"Both; good because it seemed to say that he was not dead, and bad because he was so ill."

"Pray tell me all about it."

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"I saw him riding through the dark streets of a city in a close carriage, with a man on either side of him. They looked savagely and unfeelingly at him in his distress——"

"Describe the men."

"One was short, with red hair and sandy whiskers all over his face; the other was tall, with black, curly hair, black eyes, dark face and moustache——"

"There, that will do," interrupted Florence, who recognised the Cuban in this succinct description. "Tell me the rest of your dream."

"I saw him in a low, dirty room, with a doctor bending over him, looking, oh! so pale and ill that I felt like rushing to him. Can it be—can it be that my dear Fred is alive?" moaned the mother, walking the floor in her anguish

"Calm yourself," pleaded the girl, who was scarcely less agitated. "If he is alive he will come back to you"

"You know his body has never been found," she said, turning her tearful face to her visitor. "If he is alive, he is ill, and I cannot go to him."

"He will be found if living."

"Who will find him?" demanded the parent, stopping suddenly in her walk, and looking sorrowfully at her young friend.

"Mr. Smith will never give up searching for him until he learns that he is either dead or until he finds him."

"How do you know that?"

"I *know* he will find him," was the vehement reply. "Has he not shown the greatest interest in Fred? Will he not be the most likely to know something about him? He has left Somerville now, and I am sure it is to find out all he can about your poor boy."

Florence regretted that she had spoken these words, for they harrowed the mother to the very soul. But they could not be recalled, and she could only pray that they might eventuate in something good to her.

She did her utmost to soothe and quiet her, and had measurably succeeded when she left the house and started homeward.

The day was just ending when she left the village to walk the short distance that intervened between that and her home; but she had gone but a few yards when she heard quickening footsteps behind her, and a moment later Señor Almanaz was at her side.

It was the same figure that she had seen in her dream.

The Spaniard gracefully lifted his hat, and spoke in the pure English for which he was noted.

"I am glad you have so far recovered as to be able to take an afternoon stroll."

"I feel quite well."

"I was sorry that I was not able to see you this afternoon, as I am about to leave Somerville."

"For good?"

"Yes. I return to Cuba from which beautiful isle I have been absent too long."

"When do you go?"

"To-morrow morning."

"Ah, that is soon."

Florence was swayed by such a shuddering disgust for the man at her side that she could not utter any hypocritical regrets at his intended departure. She was too much relieved at the thought to allow her to do any such thing. For while the Cuban walked beside her she saw another shadowy form bending over the prostrate figure of the widow's son.

They conversed in a rambling manner until they reached a gate of the lane leading into her father's home. At this point the Cuban hastened forward to unfasten the gate for her and, on acccunt of his tall figure, he was compelled to stoop somewhat in order to do so.

At that instant Florence uttered a slight scream, and covered her face with her hands.

"What is the matter?" he asked, hastening to her side.

"Nothing," she replied; "it has passed over."

As the dark evil-looking man bent over to take the gate fastening, it was the same figure that she had seen in her dream, and she could not avoid the faint gasping scream that escaped her at the startling repetition.

The two walked in silence up the lane until they reached the gate, which opened into the yard of the house. This was drawn open by the señor, who waited for her to pass in.

She did so, and he lingered, wishing to enter, and yet waiting for the invitation, which did not come. Looking him fully in the face, Florence said in her quiet manner:

"Good evening, Señor Almanaz."

"Miss Woodland—Florence, I do not understand what this means."

"It means simply that I cannot see you again. I wish you a pleasant voyage to your home again. Good evening."

She bowed low, turned about, and walked into the house, without uttering another word, or once looking back.

Señor Alvarido Almanaz gazed after her for a few minutes, like one transfixed. He seemed unable to comprehend what had passed. Then, as it all came over him, he turned on his heel, and walked rapidly away.

Florence Woodland walked silently into the house, and went to her room. At the tea table her father was reserved and silent, and acted in a manner which showed that something troubled him.

When the meal was finished it came out.

"It was singular, Florence, that Almanaz should have figured in both our dreams; don't you think so?"

"I do."

"And in both so unfavourably?"

"It does seem strange."

Silence followed for a few moments, and then the father said:

"I confess I do not like him. I always had a good opinion of him, and I cannot call to mind anything that he has ever said or done that was not what it should be."

Just then Judge Woodland was not thinking of his dream, but of the words that the detective had spoken on the preceding evening.

"I do not like him. He told me a short time ago that he was to sail for Cuba to-morrow——"

"I am glad of it."

"And he bade me good-bye."

"I am glad to hear that also."

"And I was unspeakably relieved to be well rid of him."

"And that makes me more pleased than all," said the father, as he rose from his seat and kissed the forehead of his daughter.

(*To be continued.*)

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I HAD joined a party in the hope of a few days' sport among the hills near Amulpore, and found my host a most agreeable companion. We had many tastes in common, and found pleasant topics for conversation as we sat smoking our cheroots on the broad verandah. One evening I was sitting alone.

Where he came from I cannot tell, but all at once, through the faint blue smoke of my cheroot, appeared a little withered fakir, peering at me from under the loose folds of his dirty turban. His skinny brown body was naked, save for the presence of a piece of tiger-skin wrapped about his loins, and a belt that ran across his body from shoulder to waist. He was muttering to himself, but the only words that I could catch were "Brahma, Brahma, Radhe-fusee."

Surprise made me speechless. I simply stared at the wizened face and glittering black eyes, wondering what he was going to do. The sound of the swinging purdah told of Walworth's approach.

"Did you think that I had forsaken you?" he said lightly; "Thura's interviews are interminable. He is as long-winded as a tipsy Irishman."

I half turned towards him while he was speaking. As he came round and resumed his chair, I said, in an undertone: "What do you think of this fossil?"

"What fossil?" he asked.

"The one before us," I replied, turning and looking at the place where the fakir had stood. No fakir was there. On the gravel walk lay a half-coiled cobra. Walworth started to his feet and called for Marja to bring him a gun. The cobra lay quiet for a moment, as if in contemplation of the situation, then, at the sound of approaching feet, with slow and graceful movement and erect head, slid across the sodden grass and disappeared through an opening under the verandah.

"Rather dangerous fossil," said Walworth, eyeing me curiously: "the men must keep a watch for him. You are a cool one, I must confess, my lad."

"I was not alluding to the snake," replied I: "It had reference to the fakir. I wonder what became of the poor wretch. The cobra frightened him away, I suppose. What are you about?" I continued, seeing Marja coming from the bungalow with a slender reed pipe in one hand and a chafing dish, on which burnt an odorous, smoking fire in the other.

"A charm for his snakeship," said my host laughing. "A cloud of aromatic incense and a serenade on the toumril."

But neither the incense nor the seductive strains of the toumril were sufficiently potent to call the cobra from his covert.

"That no time cobra," said Marja. "Sahib saw fakir, but all at once no fakir, only snake. Marja knows."

His tones were mysterious. I smiled and looked at his master. "A metamorphosis, eh?" Walworth nodded. "A clear case of Theosophy," I continued. Walworth looked grave. He dismissed the servant with a wave of his hand, threw away his cigar, shifted his position slightly, and arranged himself more comfortably in his chair.

"You are sceptical," he said. "Listen to what I have to tell you; perhaps then you will believe.

"I was a much younger man than you when I came to India. I was surgeon of the Fusiliers. Shortly after we were stationed at the fort I was invited to an entertainment given by a native nobleman at his palace in the city. The scene reminded me of the 'Arabian Nights.' Oriental magnificence was mingled with European elegance. We were received in an open court-yard, spread with cream-coloured Yac rugs, in the centre of which a fountain played in a white marble basin, cooling the air with its perfumed spray. I halted at the upper step of the stairway, and stood leaning with one hand on the broad railing watching the kaleidoscopic scene before me.

"Our colonel and his wife stopped a moment to speak to me. As they turned to go Mrs. Beldon's name was called, and, a little lower down, was a young girl. I thought I had never seen one so beautiful.

"She was dark, but her skin was a pale, transparent brown, flushed with the crimson of a rose leaf. Her lips were carmine, opening, as she smiled, over teeth as white as pearls. Her soft, lustreless black hair was drawn up from her temples and caught back by a comb of gold and filigree. Her eyes were dark, soft and velvety.

"'So you were going to pass me unnoticed!' she said, in the sweetest voice possible.

"'Why, Naida! what are you doing here alone? When did you return?'

"'To-day. I am not alone. Papa is over there, speaking to General Monckton. Isn't this the loveliest fête?'

"I was duly presented to Miss Howe.

"To make a long story short, I called on her, fell in love with her, proposed to and married her.

"Her father was an Englishman, a judge on a Northern circuit; her mother, some said, was a Spaniard, others said she was an Italian Begum. Little cared I what the mother was, I loved her as my very soul.

"The first month of my married life was passed in unalloyed happiness. All the hours were golden hours. The Paradise lost to old Father Adam seemed restored to me. But by-and-bye, a cloud no bigger than a man's hand appeared on the horizon. I observed a change in Naida. She was alternately very quiet and very restless. She was nervous and out of sorts. She would start and shiver when the clock chimed, or murmur blankly and shudder if a door slammed.

"'What is it, Naida?' I asked one day. 'You are not yourself. What is the matter with you?'

"She glanced wearily at me. 'I hardly know. I am afraid I am a little homesick. I think I want Gurgah.'

"'Who is Gurgah?'

"'My ayah.'

"'You shall have Gurgah. Why didn't you speak of her before?'

"The next day I found a small, dark woman, in a snowy garment, with a grave countenance enlivened by a nose-ring and ear-plates, squatting on the floor beside Naida's hammock. It was the ayah. Days of sunshine followed. My wife chattered and laughed to her heart's content. Poor child! she was homesick.

"I was waiting in my gharry one evening for a friend who was to drive with me to an outpost a few miles from the station. As I entered his compound I noticed a bevy of ladies at *chotah-hazree* on the verandah Not in a mood to join them I drew up under a tree and sent my boy to the house. I was sufficiently near to hear their voices, and the conversation was distinctly audible above the clatter of silver and china. As a matter-of-fact, uninterested Benedict, I paid no attention to their chatter, until I heard a voice, rendered shrill by surprise, exclaim:

"'Naida Howe married! Good Gracious! Who is the unfortunate man? He must have been either a stranger or a lunatic. What did you all mean by permitting him to marry her? Was no one kind enough to warn the poor fellow?'

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"What on earth did the woman mean? I strained my ears to catch the reply.

"'A warning would have done him no good. He was the most infatuated man I ever saw. Love wrapped him as with a garment. And, besides, it never does to burn one's fingers with other people's fires. I daresay they will get along; Naida is very peculiar, but she is a very sweet girl.'

"'Peculiar! I should say so——' At that moment Kirk came out and we drove away. All the evening the echo of those dreadful words rang in my ears. What did it all mean?

"I reached home with a strange foreboding of evil. I felt heavy and oppressed It was so still you might have fancied that death filled the place. By the shining panels on the wall hard by the bay window, I caught sight of a jewelled hand toying with the folds of the curtain. The red glint of the gems sparkled on the dusky skin. I called her name softly, 'Naida!'

"'Ah.'

"She rose and pushed the curtain aside and came languidly towards me. There was a peculiar expression in her eyes. She stared at me for a second time, and then, before I could say a word, glided from the room. Her handkerchief had fallen. I raised it from the floor; a faint subtle odour emanated from its folds. I cast it from me—I can't tell why—and crossed over to the window.

"The punkah boy was asleep on the grass, with my Irish setter beside him. I was about to call and rouse him, when out into the moonlight from the black shade of a clump of caladiums sprang the slight, graceful form of an animal. It streaked across the ground in sinuous track; the moon showed its tawny yellow hide spotted with brown. It was a cheetah.

"Alarmed for the boy, I jumped through the window and, catching him by the shoulder, dragged him to his feet. His teeth chattered and his dark face grew livid.

"'The cheetah, sahib! That cheetah has been running about the bungalow nearly all week.'

"I sent immediately for the men servants of the establishment and set them as guard over the bungalow: then I went to seek Naida.

"I called her name softly, not wishing to alarm her, but no answer came to my tender call. I opened the door. A pale blue light burnt in a silver sconce that hung on the wall. The moonbeams fell in through the open window and mingled with the light of the lamp. A faint white smoke hung over the further corner of the room. I looked at the couch—it was empty. I glanced about the room—no one was there. Where were they—Naida and her nurse? Could they be out on the lawn? Already I fancied the murderous teeth and talons of the cheetah tearing the delicate flesh of my darling. Perhaps at that moment he was sucking her life-blood. I rushed out of the bungalow shouting her name—'Naida! Naida! Naida!'

"Followed by half-a-dozen natives, I hurried over the compound, but we saw neither wife nor ayah. Nearly frantic, I was returning to the house. In front of the bungalow I saw a white object—it was the nurse.

"Where is your missy?" I cried, grasping her arm.

"She rested her glistening eyes on my face while she deliberately answered:

"'Missy in the bungalow, in her own room.'

"'The cheetah! the cheetah!' cried the men behind me.

"'Where?' I called excitedly.

"'There, on lawn, close by bungalow!'

"A wild yell and the scream, 'He jumped in missy window! he jump in missy window!'

"In an instant I was at Naida's door. I flung it open. No cheetah was to be seen; but on the foot of the couch sat my wife, gasping breathlessly and staring wildly about her.

"'Darling,' I cried, 'where have you been? Are you hurt? Where is the cheetah?'

"She answered me by bursting into tears on my shoulder. I let her weep unreservedly while I caressed her beautiful hair. Presently I raised her head, and, holding her face between my hands, looked into her eyes. Their expression baffled me. She put out her hands and pushed me from her.

"'Where is Gurgah?' she said, in a husky whisper.

"Some one was already bending over her. The ayah's thin arms lifted her up and carried her to her bed-chamber. I heard her scream aloud and beat her hands upon the wall.

"Was she mad? The fearful thought darted like lightning through my brain. I went to the door and looked in. Her eyes were roaming here and there about the room. Gurgah was leaning over her, chafing her hands and crooning a low, soothing song. My presence seemed to irritate her; she turned away when she met my gaze, buried her head in the pillow, and lay there with her face downwards. I did not want to torture her. I went to my own room.

"In the morning, to my great surprise, I found her on the verandah. No sign of last night's excitement was visible. She was endeavouring to make Taio, her pug, sit erect and hold a bit of biscuit on his nose.

"'I am putting the stupid fellow through a course of training,' she cried gaily, as I came upon the scene. Her voice was sweet and clear, and told of no pain or distress. She arose from her stooping posture, thrust her arm in through mine, and said:

"'Let's take a walk through the compound, dearest. I want to hear the birds sing before breakfast. I wonder,' she went on, as we walked along under the palm shade, 'if you are my soul's affinity?'

"'Of course,' I replied. 'We would not have fallen in love so soon and married, if an affinity had not existed between us.'

"'You do not quite understand me. I mean celestial affinity—a bond that will last beyond time.'

"Her look wandered off into space.

"'John,' she said, 'do you believe in the progress of souls?'

"'I have never given the subject a thought, so I cannot say. I believe in the progress of bodies,' I replied lightly.

"'You have more faith in materialism than in spirituality,' she continued gravely. 'You should study, John.'

"I smiled. 'Wisdom thy name is Naida! My dear, whence comes all this learning—is Gurgah the deep well from which you draw? You are too much for me, little woman.'

"I plucked a rose from the bush that we were passing and playfully tipped her on the chin with it. 'See, there is Schinasawing; they want us in the breakfast-room. Come, let us go and see what the cook has provided.'

"The following week was one of tumult and commotion. The entire station was aroused. A cheetah was making the rounds of the compounds, and more than one person was terrified by the sight of the tawny beast creeping stealthily about their premises. Major Dent surprised it asleep in the forks of a toddy-tree at the back of the hospital, but before he could secure a weapon the animal managed to escape. Naughty children required no fictitious bugbear to terrify them into good behaviour now; the very name of this notorious visitor subdued the little culprits to prompt obedience and abject penitence. At night all bungalows were closed.

"Recollecting Naida's terror the night of the cheetah's visit to us, I forbade the subject to be mentioned in her presence, and, unknown to her, I provided weapons for the men-servants, and kept constant guard on the bungalow.

"Late one night, as I was returning from a visit to a sick man at the hospital, I descried lights flitting about my compound. Excited shouts issued from the shrubbery, and the loud yelping of hounds filled the air.

"Gurgah sprang to meet me as I leapt from my gharry.

"'Oh, sahib,' she cried; grasping my arm in mad eagerness, 'the cheetah is out! Call off the men! They will kill it!'

"'That's what I want them to do,' I returned, hastily breaking from her grasp. I ran hurriedly in the direction of the melée, closely followed by Gurgah.

"'Where is it, Schinasawing?' I called.

"'In the pecpul copse, sahib.'

"There was the simultaneous crack of a dozen rifles, and a loud, wild wail from the ayah.

"All rushed forward to the thicket. With a cry of consternation the men fell back. There upon the earth, riddled with bullets, bleeding and dying, lay—Naida!"

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A FATHER'S FORETHOUGHT

CHAPTER I.

THERE was once a time, according to some of our old codes of laws, when a girl's dowry consisted only of a wreath of roses. It is no longer the case now. To-day the question of the dowry is the most important one of the marriage, and causes in various families many funny, sad and touching scenes. It is one of these family scenes that I want to tell you about.

Let us enter into the house of M. Desgranges, an old retired merchant, who lived at Villeneuve Saint Georges, a little town a short distance south of Paris. His daughter Madeleine had been asked in marriage by a young architect, and the two young people were desperately in love with each other.

M. Grandval, however, the young man's father, would not allow his son to marry anyone who had not a dowry of 200,000 francs, and M. Desgranges would only give his daughter 100,000. His wife urged him to give the amount needed; his daughter implored him; but he remained inflexible. Madame Desgranges belonged to that class of soft-hearted mothers who cannot speak of their daughters without tears in their eyes, so she begged and insisted, until at last, seeing that she made no impression on her husband, she rose and said with indignation:

"M. Desgranges, do you wish to know what I think of you? I think you are a man devoid of heart and feeling."

"I know it, my dear."

"You are not a father, you are a——"

"An executioner," he supplied theatrically.

"Do you know, Monsieur Desgranges, that you will soon succeed in making me crazy, in making me lose my temper entirely!"

"Dear mother, enough, enough!" said Madeleine, rising from her seat. "I do not wish to be the cause of any disagreement between you and my father, and since he does not wish to grant our request, since he refuses to do what we are so anxious for, that which would make the happiness of Henri and myself——" She stopped and burst into tears.

"She weeps!" cried Madame Desgranges. "Oh, my daughter! My dear little daughter! Does not even this move you, monster? Can you see her tears, and hear her say in her gentle voice that you could make her happy, and remain obdurate?"

"What do you expect, my dear?" said her husband. "Whenever I see a woman in tears, I am on my guard."

"What do you mean?"

"It is not my fault, I can assure you," said he. "When we were first married, you wept so often, when you wanted me to do anything for you, that women's tears now always have the effect of making me obstinate."

"Oh! father, father!" cried Madeleine, "can you doubt the sincerity of my grief? Do you not believe that I love Henri? He is so good and sensible, and you say yourself that his prospects as an architect are very good."

"That is all true."

"Yes, well then," interrupted Madame Desgranges, "why not let her marry him?"

"I have not the least objection. I give my hearty consent, and with my consent one hundred thousand francs as her dowry. But not the two thousand which Monsieur Grandval demands."

"And why not?" asked Madame Desgranges.

"Because I am not rich enough to give it to my daughter without inconveniencing myself."

"At your age," said Madame Desgranges, "one has not many wants."

"On the contrary, each year brings new ones. Each infirmity is an extra expense. My sight fails; I need glasses. My limbs become feeble; I need a carriage, and so on."

"Come," persisted Madame Desgranges: "I know that you have a good heart. Will it not be a pleasure to you to bleed yourself for your daughter?"

"Ah, you are alluding to the old legend of the pelican, which is said to tear open its own breasts to feed its young. But this has been proved to have no truth in it."

At this moment the young suitor entered. Madeleine saw him, ran to him, and taking him by the hand, said:

"Come Henri, come and help us. My father begins to yield to our entreaties."

"I?" said Desgranges.

"Oh! Monsieur Desgranges!" the young man said with emotion.

Monsieur Desgranges turned to him and said, "I am very glad, Henri, to see you. But, my dear young friend, I fear you have no heart. You are beloved by a charming girl, good, well-educated and affectionate, and you are not willing to marry her because she has not a dowry of 200,000 francs."

"But, father," said Madeleine, "he——"

"Do not interrupt me, my dear. When I married your mother she was worth fifty thousand times less than you."

"Sir!" cried Madame Desgranges.

"I meant to say she had fifty thousand francs less than you will have, but I did not hesitate."

"Neither do I hesitate," said Henri, becoming very much excited. "It is my father who objects."

"Yes," said Madeleine, "it is his father. He himself thinks nothing about the money. He has told me twenty times that he would marry me if I had not a sou—that he would rather I had nothing."

"That is true," said the young man.

"Yes, yes, I know—they all say that. I said it myself, but to myself."

"How?" said Madame Desgranges. "Was it not true, then?"

"What is true is, that I find the maxim that fathers should sacrifice themselves for their children a very stupid one."

"Sacrifice yourself!" said Madeleine. "Do I want you to do that? Do either of us wish it? Will not the money still remain with you?"

"Tut, tut! The money cannot be in two places at once. If I give it to you, I lose it. If I do not give it to you, I keep it. That is as clear as day."

"But, father——"

"My mind is made up. A father should always be richer than his children."

"What does it matter, which is the richer?" said Madame Desgranges. "Will not their home always be ours?"

"Never! A father should never trust to his children for support,—on their own account, so that they may never be ungrateful."

CHAPTER II.

ONE month after this scene, the young people were married. A year later, Madame Desgranges was godmother, and the next year Monsieur Desgranges was godfather. Three years having passed, we find the young couple, with their children, settled with the old people at Villeneuve Saint Georges. I have said that Monsieur Henri Grandval was an architect, but a young architect is, alas too often an architect in name only.

Of all young artists, architects are surely the most unhappy.

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One does not build houses simply for pleasure, and who is willing to intrust them to a young architect? He has a profession, and no materials to exercise it on. His profession is to build, and he has no buildings to make. This almost broke the good heart of Madame Desgranges, and brought down on the head of Monsieur Desgranges a torrent of abuse and entreaties.

"My dear, I beg of you to increase their income!"

"I shall certainly not do that," answered Monsieur Desgranges. "I am only too well pleased with the way in which I have acted. For I ask you, why have our daughter and son-in-law stayed with us for three months and four days? And why are they going to stay with us until the twentieth of December?"

"What a question! Because they love us, and are happy with us. Because they know that they give us pleasure. Because they are affectionate, tender-hearted——"

"In fact, just the opposite of what I am. Is it not so?" said Monsieur Desgranges, laughing.

Then going to his wife he said: "My dear, I adore you, because you will always remain a child!"

"What! a child!"

"I mean to say that you will always be the same good, naïve, credulous, confiding creature that I married with so much pleasure."

"What do you mean? Naïve, credulous?" answered Madame Desgranges, slightly offended. "Do you pretend that our children are not——"

"No, my dear wife, they are all you say, and more also. But do you really believe that your daughter, who is so pretty that she loves to show herself, because people have pleasure in looking at her—that your son-in-law, with his artistic tastes and his imagination, would leave Paris and the first pleasures of the winter, and make the journey backwards and forwards every day to attend to his business, simply for the pleasure of playing a game of cards with a father-in-law who is beginning to grow deaf, and a mother-in-law who is getting to be rather too talkative."

"But what do you think then? What do you suppose keeps them so long with us?"

"My dear," said Monsieur Desgranges laughingly, "do you remember that, when you were young, and had beautiful hair, you were always delighted to go to the country in order not to have to part it, so as to prevent it growing thin? Well, our children are delighted to stay here, in order to give their purse a rest."

"Shameful! Why not say at once that our children look on our house as an hotel?"

"Doubtless they do, the Inn of the Gold Lion. Here is accommodation for horse and man, for children, who are 'hard up,' and have to economise. If they have spent too much at the theatre, at balls, at concerts, they go to stay a few days with papa. If they want to pay for a little trip, they spend a month with papa. If one of the children is a little ailing, they take him to the country to stay with papa."

"Oh, you miserable creature! You attribute everything to selfishness, even paternal love."

"But suppose, on the contrary," said Monsieur Desgranges, without seeming to hear what his wife said, "suppose that I had doubled my daughter's dowry, as you wished me to do, what would have been the result? Considering my son-in-law's somewhat impulsive disposition, my children to-day would have been no richer, and I should have been much poorer. I should not have been able to keep them here so long, nor to entertain them so well, and they would not have come to stay with us so often, because they would have been better off at home.

"Ah, my dear, if our children were richer than we, my daughter would have found Villeneuve Saint Georges too damp in the autumn on account of the fogs from the river, and would have thought it unhealthy for the children. My son-in-law would have told us that the journey backwards and forwards from Paris every day was too fatiguing for him. This is the advice I give to all fathers whose daughters marry. If you wish to keep your children, keep your money. If you wish to enjoy your grandchildren, keep your money."

CHAPTER III.

It is now the thirtieth of November. The scene is still at Villeneuve Saint Georges. The family of Monsieur Desgranges is a very happy one. He has never seemed so gay and happy. It is the twenty-fifth anniversary of his marriage.

"My dear," he said to his wife, "this is a day which should be celebrated in a dignified manner. Everything must be in the very best style. Let us have a dinner to suit a gourmand (for you know you consider me one). I have told my daughter, who has gone to spend a day in Paris, for some reason that I do not know, that she and her husband must return by the four o'clock train. She will find in her room a pretty new dress, which I wish her to wear to-day.

"For yourself, in order to prove that you still love me a little in spite of all my faults, wear at dinner and in the evening, at the little party we are to have, the diamonds belonging to my poor mother. They represent to me all that I have loved the most in the world—she who gave them to me for you; you who have worn them for my sake and hers, and our daughter who wears them for the sake of all of us." Monsieur Desgranges turned away to hide his emotion.

Why did not Madame Desgranges answer him? Why did she remain for some time immovable with her eyes cast down? Why, when her daughter returned, did she take her weeping into her room? Why was Henri so sad? Why did the announcement of dinner make them all shudder? Why, on entering the dining-room, was the mother so troubled at the sight of her husband?

When he saw her, he exclaimed, "What! you have not put on your diamonds?"

For her only answer, his wife threw herself weeping into his arms. His daughter fell on her knees at his feet, and covered his hands with kisses.

"You have not the diamonds?" he said. "What, then, have you done with them?"

His wife and children were silent.

"You do not answer?" said he in a severe tone. "It is then my turn to speak. I know everything. You have sold them! Sold them to pay for the imprudence of your son-in-law. Yes; because he wished to go into a badly managed speculation; because he has been foolish enough to become security for the rogues who have deceived him; you have considered it necessary, in order to pay half his debt (for he still owes 12,000 francs) to sell the dearest souvenir of my poor mother; the most precious treasure of our love; to poison the joy of this happy day. Oh! it is terrible!"

His wife endeavoured to murmur some excuses.

"It is sufficient!" interrupted Monsieur Desgranges. "Here are the servants. Let us sit down."

The mother and children took their places in silence at the table. As Madame Desgranges opened her napkin she uttered a cry of joy. Her son-in-law did the same, and both rushed to Monsieur Desgranges, their eyes filled with tears.

The mother had found her jewel-box with her diamonds in it on her plate; Henri, the 12,000 francs he needed to pay his debt.

"Ah, my dear husband!"

"My dear father!"

"Enough, enough!" said Monsieur Desgranges, breaking away from their embraces. "You will not, I hope, call me egotistical any longer. Was I right now, in my caution? And do you understand now why a father should always be richer than his children, in order that he may be able to come to their aid in a critical moment, and save them from a terrible catastrophe? Only, my dear son-in-law, do not get into debt again, for I cannot afford to repeat my gift."

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"DELIGHTFUL" TREATMENT FOR CURING CORPULENCE.

The process of curing any physical disorder is so generally the converse of "delightful" that the use of this and similar terms in reference to Mr. F. C. Russell's new popular treatment for corpulency naturally attracts special attention. These terms are to be found in a large number of the letters included in the just issued 18th edition of Mr. Russell's little volume of 256 pages, "Corpulency and the Cure" (Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C.) These communications are from persons of both sexes, and it is apparent that their number is represented by thousands annually, who have found in this system of treatment a safe, rapid, and permanent cure for excessive fatness. This testimony forms in the aggregate, indeed, a wonderful record of the rapid reduction of excessive adipose tissue, and those who have personal reasons for being interested in the subject should send to the above address 6d. stamps for a copy of Mr. Russell's notably suggestive little book. "I think the treatment most delightful," writes one out of a large number of equally enthusiastic correspondents. And the expressions "Admirable tonic," "Splendid stuff," "A delicious beverage mixed with mineral waters," are of constant recurrence in this singularly interesting correspondence. The details given by many of the writers of these letters as to the results of the treatment fully justify the use of such eulogistic phrases. It must certainly be delightful to experience the sensation of losing unnecessary and dangerous fat by pounds per week, and frequently stones per month, and that by the aid of treatment which simultaneously increases the appetite and renders its reasonable indulgence innocuous. The experience, too, must be rendered still more delightful by the knowledge, which may be gained from a perusal of Mr. Russell's book, that his preparation is a pure vegetable product, without any admixture of the mineral poisons which are too frequently administered. With a candour which also is delightful, Mr. Russell prints in his book the recipe for the preparation.

SUMMER HEAT AND OBESITY.

Summer heat, with the out-door enjoyments which come in its train, is a source of unmixed delight to all whose physical condition is sound. The full feast of pleasure to which hospitable Nature at this season invites mankind, is not, however, for those whose infirmities forbid them to undergo, without serious discomfort, a considerable amount of bodily fatigue. To those in particular who are the victims of excessive corpulence, the arrival of the genial summer warmth serves chiefly as a painful reminder that, for them, the delights of long woodland rambles, the climbing of mountain tops, and all the adventurous ways of flood and field are prohibited joys. The palpitating heart, the reeling brain, and the possible deadly sunstroke, which are the concomitants of obesity, banish all the pleasant anticipations which once came with the advent of the glad summer-tide. How much of this deprivation of enjoyment and positive misery is absolutely and easily avoidable, may be learned by consulting Mr. F. Cecil Russell's "Corpulency and the Cure" (256 pages), a little work whose popularity is proved by the fact that its 18th edition has just been issued. This fact, too, indicates, in some degree, the wide area now covered by Mr. Russell's wonderful success as an expert in the reduction of excessive fat. His process, which is absolutely safe and pleasant, is so rapid in its operation that any over-corpulent lady or gentleman can easily get rid of all unnecessary weight in a very few weeks, so as to be able, before the autumn is with us, to enjoy the delightful feeling (and the appearance too) of renewed youth and energy. Mr. Russell makes no mystery of the nature of his curative preparation—apparently miraculous as are its effects in simultaneously reducing weight and increasing appetite—the consequently larger amount of food being consumed with impunity. He prints, therefore, his recipe in his singularly suggestive book, which may be obtained from Booksellers, or by sending 6d. stamps to his offices, Woburn House, 27, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C.

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NOT KNOWING WHAT ELSE TO DO.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

TO save ourselves trouble and suffering by learning from the experiences of others—that is the wisdom of history. Otherwise every generation, and every man and woman therein, would have to begin back where their ancestors did. Every soul of us has to learn the alphabet for himself; but *after that* he can read and benefit by what others have written. Is that idea plain as peas in a split pod? Yes. Well, then, let us see whether it has anything to say to the facts set forth in the following letter:—

"After my confinement," writes a woman, "in August of last year (1893), I could not get up my strength. My food did not seem to be of any use to me. In some way I was ill, but I could not give a name to the ailment. My tongue was swollen and thickly coated, and I was constantly spitting out the thick phlegm which gathered in my throat and mouth. No matter how little food I took—even a morsel—it gave me great pain at the chest and sides; and sometimes it would dart through to my back between the shoulders.

"Often I would be sick and heave and strain until I was quite sore. Then, again, a pain would take me in the stomach and cut through me like a knife. I had a dry, hacking cough which never left me, and I sweated terribly at night. The cough was so bad that I often had to hold my sides when I had spells of it.

"Nearly every bit of flesh went off my bones, and I got so weak I couldn't put my foot to the ground. People said I was in a consumption, and I had little hope of getting better. I was so nervous that the least noise would startle and upset me. Those who called said it was pitiable to see the condition I was in.

"I saw two doctors who gave me medicines, but I only got worse and worse. At the end of October (1893) I came by a small book telling about Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup, and, *not knowing what else to do*, I sent to Mr. Baxter, the druggist, Brookhouse, and got a bottle. After I had taken it but a few days, I was better. I could eat something, and it stayed on my stomach, and the pain was less severe. As I took dose after dose of the Syrup the improvement went on, all the bad feeling abated, and I gained strength. It wasn't long before the cough was quite gone, and I was well and strong as ever.

"After my recovery, a neighbour said to me, '*Mrs. Redhead, you have made my heart sad many a time when I saw you so bad.*'

"'Thank you,' I replied, 'and I was sad enough myself, but Mother Seigel's Syrup had made me glad again, for it has given me back my good health.'

"And in thankfulness for it I am very willing you should publish what I have told you. (Signed) Mrs. Mary Jane Redhead, 73, Peter Street, Blackburn, April 4th, 1894."

We congratulate Mrs. Redhead, and tender our regards to the kind-hearted neighbour who was so sorry for her. But what a pity that Mrs. R. didn't know in August what she learned in October—namely that her disease was indigestion and dyspepsia, and that Mother Seigel's Syrup is a cure for it; some folks say the only cure. Well, we suppose she had to wait her turn to find that out. There's a deal of mystery about these things.

Anyway, she knows *now*, and the printing of her story will enable lots of other sufferers to begin where she left off. They won't take the Syrup as she did, *not knowing what else to do*, but they will take it the very day they fall ill, knowing that to be exactly the right thing to do.

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